

April 3, 1984

LB 803

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Goodrich.

SENATOR GOODRICH: Mr. President and members of the body, the original bill was introduced with permissive language in it so that each county would have the option of going this route or staying with the old system of selecting jury people. The Nebraska Bar came in and said, in essence, that if you do it on a permissive basis, you have a broader jury in say, Douglas, Lancaster or any county that has done this than you would have in another county that has not done it. The broader jury would then leave us with two levels of justice. That is the reason they come up with...well first of all they requested and got an Attorney General's opinion which verified their position that it must be mandatory throughout the state so that each county has the same level of jury base and consequently the same level of justice that every other county does and we would not have a disparity among the counties. For that reason I agreed to the amendment which the committee adopted. What it really boils down to is the head of the Democratic Party, the Chairman of the Democratic Party came in and testified in favor of it, this bill, the head of the Republican Party came in and testified in favor of it, they both know the merit that is here in the bill of broadening the base from which you pick jurors so that you then end up, after you have done this, you end up with a completely purged jury list, a completely purged voter registration list. Who is there in this body that has not at least attempted to use a voter registration list? It is very seldom that you would find, even after a...immediately after purging, you would have a hard time, the way they do it now, you would have a hard time of using a jury...a voter registration list because it has not been thoroughly purged. This method would actually end up with a thoroughly purged voter registration list. You end up with a broader base from which to select your juries. It has been stated, for example that you have a number of other states that have done it already. Now, okay, where is the opposition coming from then? Well it is coming from the jury commissioners who just plain don't want to do their work. They don't mind getting the pay but they don't want to do the work. Now, that is a sad state of affairs when